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Gates Submits Memo to Dispel Panel's Criticism

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WASHINGTON—Robert M. Gates, President Reagan's embattled nominee for CIA director, has given the Senate Intelligence Committee a classified memo to disprove reports that he recommended a joint U.S.-Egyptian invasion of Libya in 1985, Administration sources said Saturday.

The memo, in which the key CIA official expressed opposition to the proposed Libyan invasion, was given to the committee as part of a determined Administration attempt to counter growing Senate opposition to Gates' nomination.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater announced Saturday that Reagan "has full confidence in the nomination" and does not intend to withdraw it, as suggested by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.).

Another White House official, who declined to be identified, added that the President's staff still believes a majority of the committee members will favor Gates.

But on Friday, Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.) had told Reagan during an Oval Office meeting that a growing number of intelligence panel members were considering voting against Gates, who is currently the acting CIA chief. The committee must approve the nomination before the full Senate can vote on it.

Early Vote a Problem

"If there's an early vote, he's in trouble," Dole said. Recalling that the President did not respond to his report, Dole said: "I raised it. He didn't say anything."

Many Intelligence Committee members, including Vice Chairman William S. Cohen of Maine, the panel's ranking Republican, have expressed a reluctance to vote for Gates if it is proven that he originated a plan for the United

States to provide air support to Egyptian troops invading Libya in an attempt to topple the regime of Moammar Kadafi.

But Administration sources predicted the issue would be put to rest when committee members read the memo that Gates sent in 1985 to his boss, then-CIA Director William J. Casey, which "strongly recommended against" the invasion scheme. Gates, who was promoted to deputy CIA director last April, was serving as the agency's chief intelligence official at the time the memo was written.

Invasion Plan Shelved

At that time, according to sources, an invasion of Libya was being urged by members of the National Security Council staff. The plan eventually was shelved, however, as a result of strong opposition from Secretary of State George P. Shultz and other Administration officials.

The sources said Gates also has told the Senate panel that there is no truth in the conclusion of the Tower Commission report that the CIA in 1985 permitted White House officials to influence an intelligence assessment of the situation in Iran. Normally, White House officials have no role in the development of intelligence estimates.

Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.), a member of the intelligence panel, said the Tower Commission report, released Thursday, supported his suspicion that Gates allowed his agency to produce an intelligence report "made to suit the policy-makers" who wanted to sell arms to Iran.

"That is one thing that just doesn't happen," said one Administration official, who declined to be identified. "And Gates, who is an analyst by trade, would never permit it."

More Testimony

The Senate Intelligence Committee, which held two days of public hearings on the Gates nomination in mid-February, is expected to hear additional testimony this week. In addition, the committee will decide whether to vote imme-

diately on the nomination or to delay it until congressional investigators have completed their review of the Iran-*contra* affair.

A number of committee members, including Sens. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) and Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), have called for a delay in the committee vote until it can be established that Gates played no role in the scandal. But Administration officials strongly oppose any delay on the grounds that it will prohibit Gates from hiring a deputy to run the agency's day-to-day operations.